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ABSTRACT

It is suggested that despite its simplicity, neutrality, and practical nature, Esperanto is at risk of extinction because of the growing dominance of English as an international language. It is further proposed that in order to assure its maintenance, Esperantists must federate into a state with political autonomy. The first section of the document examines risks to less commonly spoken languages and their cultures, particularly in Europe, and the encroachment of English and other common modern languages. Problems associated with these language shifts are discussed, especially ways in which English is poorly suited as a universal lingua franca. The second section advances an argument for a politically-based alternative to the spread of English, arguing that Esperanto is the only language ready for the role of universal lingua franca, has a substantial body literary and scientific texts, and has a flexibility unequalled by other existing languages. The third part outlines a short-term linguistic strategy to advance the role of Esperanto. An addendum to the paper is provided specifically for Europeans. (MSE)

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A Policy for Esperanto

Andrea Chiti-Batelli

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A POLICY FOR ESPERANTO

Andrea Chiti-Batelli

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Translated from the French by Diccon Masterman

FOREWORD

Pacifism is not enough *is the title of a well known essay by Lord Lothian: one of the bedside books of those who, like me, are battling for the establishment of a European Federation (and, tomorrow, for a world-wide Federation). Pacifism is not enough because such a feeling has to become an institution, has to crystallize into a State, has to give the idea a skeleton, so to speak; for peace is the consequence of law and order, qualities which in their turn presume the existence of a supranational State which supports them and guarantees respect for them.*

Well, in the pages to come I shall be advancing a similar argument. The simplicity, the neutrality, the practical nature of Esperanto "is not enough". Even in this case the idea has to change into a State. The facts of linguistic hegemony are indeed political facts and have their genesis in political power. Thus it was that Latin was able to dominate in ancient times. If Esperanto does not discover its "Roman empire" there will only remain a noble Utopia rapidly becoming extinct like certain species of plants or animals. The latter's very existence is threatened by the pollution and progressive destruction of green areas and their habitat by Man. In the same way, Esperanto and Esperantists will be quickly driven to extinction by the gradual dominance of English as a universal lingua franca *(which, increasingly, it already is* de facto*): a dominance which will become almost irreversible at a certain point since the cost of changing back to Esperanto will have become so great that people will be forced to adapt themselves to a situation with no alternatives from then on.*

So time is against Esperanto, and the years still at its disposal are henceforth numbered.

"Federate or perish" has been another slogan of federalist Europeans for fifty or sixty years. Turn into a State or perish is the choice which is now confronting Esperanto and its protagonists for the reasons that I shall try to explain in the following pages.

It is a question of a perspective, a strategy, a concept which has been up to now completely foreign to the Esperantists who are prisoners of the delusion that Esperanto eventually will dominate thanks to its linguistic merits which everyone will finally appreciate. And if we do not manage to get beyond this delusion, the International Language, I repeat, will undergo a rapid and final decline. Motus in fine velocior. ..

* * *

The text that follows — a summary is at the end — was delivered to the 5th Conference of the International Academy of Linguistic Law (Cuba, 22-27 April 1996), dedicated to the theme "Law, language and autochthony".

So it was aimed at an international public since that Academy is present on every continent. If I had only had to address a European audience — as most often happens — I should have added what I am about to say in the Addendum for Europeans.

PART ONE

The dilemma: the pike and the shark

> *As sociedades a que se nega o diálogo — comunicação — e, em seu lugar, se lhes oferecem "comunicados", resultantes de compulsão ou "doação", se fazem preponderantemente "mudas".*
>
> [Societies denied dialogue — communication — which is replaced by "communiqués", whether imposed or agreed, mostly become "dumb".]
>
> (Paolo Freire, *Educação como prática da liberdade*)

> *¿Callaremos ahora para llorar después?*
>
> [Shall we fall silent now and weep later?]
>
> (Ruben Dario)

Language-swallowing: the risk threatening ethnic groups

Up to now specialists in ethnic policy and "language law" have concentrated on the dangers which directly threaten the "stateless" ethnic and minority groups. They have repeatedly shown the close links between language and culture and that safeguarding the dialects of these groups is a *sine qua non* both for the preservation of their identity and of their way of life[1]. They have added that it is the lack of real political power and minority status within a State whose official language (and culture) is different, that is the root cause of their alienation[2]. They have concluded that only real political autonomy, backed up by real financial and budgetary independence, can reverse the current trend towards the progressive extinction of these forms of speech[3]. And they have made it clear that a federal, State-run, monitoring organization will make that possible[4]: the only way permanently to guarantee the revival that the ethnicities and micro-nations are nowadays enjoying to a certain extent the world over, especially in Europe[5]; this revival being otherwise condemned to be no more than ephemeral (and self-destructive, as in Yugoslavia), and the full independence and "sovereignty" of these micro-nations no more than a will-o'-the-wisp[6].

Since this aspect of the problem is, as I have said, the best known, I shall limit myself to the above thoughts.

...and the new dangers which threaten the dominant languages as well

The above mentioned specialists, on the other hand, have completely neglected another aspect of the problem which is the subject of this thesis. They have concentrated, so to speak, on the "national pike" (French which is "swallowing up" Breton or Alsatian; Spanish which is endangering Basque and Galician, etc.); and they have not noticed behind this "national pike" a still more dangerous "international shark" busily swallowing up the lot subjugated, minority forms of speech and dominant, national dialects alike. That shark is English.

Such an assertion can appear exaggerated only to those who don't take account

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of: *a)* objective reasons for English to be steadily confirmed as the planet's *lingua franca*; *b)* lessons of history on the simultaneous destruction of speech forms and culture by a living language raised to the status of a universal, auxiliary language"; *c)* the diachronic nature of every historical phenomenon, that is to say its quantitative, not to mention qualitative, transformations with the passage of time. It is these three points that we are now going to deal with.

The "reasons" for English, the language of colonialists

The double danger which we have just emphasized is important, for the demands of a single language for international communication are simultaneously heavy, penetrating and ever more insistent.

Such demands are *heavy* because they reach into every domain starting at the lowest levels (tourism, overseas workers), on up to medium levels (business, air traffic) and into the highest levels (multinational companies, global finance, science). Such demands are *penetrating* because there are domains (e.g. scientific research) in which a sole, auxiliary language is a *sine qua non* of the speed and multilateral nature of communication which is essential for avoiding delays and duplicated effort and hence to permit the quickest scientific progress thanks to science's universally "transparent" nature. Finally, it is *growing*, because we are living in an increasingly integrated world at the heart of which international communication is becoming ever more intense and where, as a result, the economies, the advantages to be gained (and the losses avoided) by using a single language will be ever more notable.

This is the reason why the danger is qualitatively different from phenomena such as the "gallicisation" of European languages in the XVIIIth century and why it looks more and more like the progressive, increasing erasure of dialects which national languages daily exclude from cultural, literary and scientific communication: an exclusion which is the harbinger of extinction.

So there is no time to lose: if we do not manage *now* to find an *alternative solution* to English; if there is not to be a *sufficiently strong will* to put such an alternative into practice, and if, finally, there is to be no *political power* allowing it to be established, the definitive — and henceforth irreversible — victory of English will be a question of several decades with the outcome that we have just outlined.

...and the risks which it brings in its wake. The lessons of history

We must stress this outcome that is too often underplayed. The ravages of English will be enormous once it has settled into its *lingua franca* role. In this context, the example of Latin is crucial. As the vehicle of both a dominant literary and scientific culture as well as the language of a dominant political power, Latin destroyed *in radice* all the ancient European languages and cultures, from the Iberian peninsula to Dacia, including the language and culture of a people as civilized and developed as the Etruscans. English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, all have had the same destructive effect in the two Americas. So it is certain that English will produce the same results, like it or not. Do we have to accept and resign ourselves to the eventual disappearance of all the other languages and ways of life?

"Diachronism"

Such a forecast, I emphasize, may appear to be far-fetched, even "paranoiac" (according to the definition given to it by a French author[8]). If so, it is due to ignoring, on the one hand, the "acceleration of history" (brought about especially by the vertiginous growth of means of popular communication) and, on the other, the amount and type of alterations — that is both quantitative and qualitative — of historical events in general and linguistic events in particular.

Who would have thought that Gaulish would have disappeared at the time of the conquest of Gaul by Julius Caesar? Yet... *gutta cavat lapidem*, and Gaulish is dead. In those days several centuries were needed to extinguish it. Today things move much faster, and faster still, notably under the influence of the mass media. The current fate of dialects — this must be emphasized — is a foretaste of what the major national languages in turn will undergo in the future.

Again, who could have foreseen the hole in the ozone layer at the beginning of this century, a time when only the first cars and the very first airplanes were making their appearance, while the electrification of the planet was derisory in comparison with the present situation? Such a prophecy would also have been deemed to be "paranoiac". And yet the hole in the ozone layer is there. So we must force ourselves to "think the unthinkable" to borrow from the title of a book written thirty years ago about the consequences of an atomic war[9]. And indeed some people — although *rari nantes in gurgite vasto* — are beginning to do it[10].

Powerful support for the conviction that "the future has already begun" is provided by two facts which at first sight — wrongly — might seem of negligible importance. The bibliographies which you read in recent books and scientific articles — no matter what the subject or the language in which they are written — now only quote works written in English, above all American works (exceptions to this are becoming increasingly rare); other nations — entirely ignored — therefore are increasingly assuming an air of... illiterates, of *Naturvölker* [primitive peoples], like the pygmies, the steatopygous or the Australian aborigines: in any case, they figure as a scientifically negligible quantity which is not worth caring about, everything essential being already in the American "Koran". (That is literally true, and one hundred per cent so, for works published in the USA, but it is daily becoming ever more true even for works published elsewhere).

In parallel, and not only in America, the great data banks only log information in English: so tomorrow history (and through it all culture in the broadest sense of the word) will be visualized solely on the basis of what has been retained and written in that language. As for the others — us — ... *vae victis!*

Two completely overlooked facts — which are nevertheless what would be called *escalofriantes* (terrifying) in Spanish, above all because of their passive acceptance, as if it went without saying, by the whole of the world's scientific community.

English, a language unsuited to the function of a universal "lingua franca"

The final argument which prompts us to look for an alternative to English as a solution is the fact that that language is particularly unsuited, even more so than other languages, to international communication (among the most widespread

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"western" languages, the least unsuited, according to the linguists, is Spanish[11]). English, indeed, not only shares with other living languages the difficulties, irregularities and illogicalities which are features of them all, but it has in addition a complicated and absurd orthography; some twenty vowels which make it less intelligible (a defect which is made worse by its strong monosyllabic tendency); the abundance of idioms; the absence, indeed, of any standard pronunciation, a fact which will in the future be of great harm to the uniformity of English once it has become a universal language. And these defects are much more serious than the modest advantage of a relatively simple grammar[12].

Conclusion to the first part

The conclusion to this *pars destruens* can be expressed in a triptych:

— the cost of the "English" solution is too high (languages and cultures are swallowed up);

— the game is not worth the candle (there is no guarantee that such a language would retain its uniformity once it has been raised to the level of a *lingua franca*);

— the disparity of the conditions and starting points which such a solution will bring in its wake seems unacceptable and contrary to all democratic principles (with nations which speak English as their mother tongue in a dominant and favored position while other nations which are obliged to learn it remain dominated and disadvantaged). This is the vicious circle of a hegemony which is increasingly to be condemned the more it is destined, *rebus sic stantibus*, to grow: as would be said in Italian, *chi dòmina nòmina* and *chi nòmina dòmina*; which means: political hegemony imposes its own language, and such an imposition reinforces this hegemony: in particular by inculcating the "ideology" according to which the dominant language would rightfully occupy its prime position, not because of the domination exercised by the hegemonic country or countries, but thanks to its beauty, its perfection, its simplicity, its great expressiveness. A completely false ideology, indeed, but embraced in good faith by a number of people — and propagated in bad faith by the so-called specialists of language learning, who are all totally submitted to English[13].

So an alternative solution has to be found: which one?

PART TWO

Towards an alternative solution? A political alternative for tomorrow...

History's lesson once more: the advantages of a "dead" language

Let us move on to the *pars construens*. Once again we have to turn to history to find an outcome. And once again it is Latin which suggests a solution. Even after the fall of the Roman Empire that language continued for almost a thousand years to be the only language of international communication for culture, philosophy, science and — last but not least — the Church. And yet, this language:

— having ceased to be the mother tongue of a dominant nation and the official language of the "super-power" of ancient times, has completely lost the power it

once had to swallow up languages and ethnic groups: the neo-Latin forms of speech were able to develop throughout the Middle Ages;

— having fallen to the level of a dead language (in this sense, therefore, an "artificial" one, since no-one learnt it any more from the lips of their parents), Latin has not changed any further: grammar, morphology, syntax have remained identical whether in Petrarch's verses from *Africa*, Spinoza's prose from *Ethica*, or the papal encyclicals.

The answer: a planned language

So it is a "dead" language which offers the solution that allows us to safeguard linguistic plurality — while ensuring, as far as possible, unity, clarity and uniformity — in the era of international communication. And if this language is planned — that is to say, conceived and developed with the express purpose of being simple, with no exceptions, very easy to learn — it then adds to the above mentioned advantages (and to that of putting everyone on an equal footing, since it is no-one's mother tongue) the extra prize of minimizing the effort and waste of time necessary to master it: thus cutting down at the same time the injustices and disparities which exist today between the wealthiest classes (whose children are the only ones really in a position to learn English) and all the others: which guarantees to the former — in the same way as to those who are English speakers — an advantage (and a sizeable one!) which nothing can justify.

And that is not the end of the matter: Esperanto, admittedly made up of words drawn from French and other Indo-European languages, but with a structure which brings it near to agglutinative and analytic languages, thereby does away with the disparities between the peoples who speak the latter languages and the western peoples who speak inflected languages, as far as is possible: everyone finds themselves, at least in principle, on an equal footing when they study Zamenhof's language[14].

Why Esperanto?

At this point I am not going to illustrate the following theses:

— Esperanto is the only planned language which is *hic et nunc* ready for use;

— that is due to the fact that it has been in existence for over a century and now has an impressive body of literary and scientific texts, etc.;

— such vitality proves factually that Esperanto's qualities — its flexibility, its ability to express the slightest nuances of abstract thought as much as the most intimate feelings — are equal to, indeed superior to those of living languages;

— all the objections which negate or raise doubts about all of this are due to ignorance or prejudice, or both together[15].

For the elaboration of these three points I leave it to the bibliography that I have given in a book written in French[16] and, above all, to the other works which I have cited in the endnotes[17]: all are indispensable, among other things, for refuting the romantic and historicist objection — the latter both idealistic and Marxist — that an "invented" language would by definition be incapable of expressing the complexity and profundity of the thoughts and feelings of the human soul. A century of Esperanto proves the opposite: and, as Disraeli said, *You cannot fight against facts: they don't mind at all.*

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The political "precondition"

> *"If one has to debate the question of Esperanto as a means of combating linguistic colonisation, one must look at which political phenomena have Esperanto as their linguistic aspect."*
>
> (L.-J. CALVET, in *Journées d'études sur l'espéranto* [actes], Université de Paris VIII, 1983)

On the other hand I want to lay stress on a subject which has been too often neglected. All the qualities which have just been enumerated, that must be acknowledged in Zamenhof's language, only make up the first condition — a necessary but not sufficient one — for its success: for a language only manages to be confirmed as an international language if it is backed up by political might analogous to that of English. Latin did not gain its place in ancient Europe thanks to Cicero's elegant prose or Virgil's beautiful verse, but plainly and simply because of the preponderance of the imperial legions, of Roman law, of the architects and engineers of Rome. It is the same for English, which is propped up by the power of the United States (and the other anglophone countries in the five continents). By contrast, it is not the same for Esperanto, and the fact that Esperantists completely neglect this political precondition — an implacable law of socio-linguistics — justifies, at least partly, the indifference and the irony with which the majority of the intelligentsia and of public opinion considers — or rather, ignores — their suggestions which are doomed to remain perpetual wishful thinking.

"How many divisions does the Pope have?", asked Stalin, forgetting that the Pope at least commands a moral authority which gives him incontestable international weight and influence, whatever the assessment of this fact may be. Esperanto itself also lacks even such influence and so has no chance, *rebus sic stantibus*, of replacing English. Its ease of learning, its logical construction, its appropriateness for its task, these are certainly trump cards, even a necessary, but quite insufficient, condition. And the unawareness on the part of the Esperantists of such an elementary truth will never be adequately condemned[8].

So we must abandon without regret this "utopian Esperantism" — the only one in existence — which leads us nowhere and substitute a "scientific Esperantism", still to be created. Louis-Jean Calvet's quoted words indicate to us the distinguishing concept and the vital step to be taken: how is this language to be given the power, the propulsion capable of "launching it into orbit" — in short, how to obtain the support of a political power able to counter the enormous vested interests which are driving English forward to its definitive victory? — That is the question.

The European hypothesis...

The author of this work — an Italian and a convinced militant for European federal unity — has always advanced the thesis that, if European Federation comes to pass, it will:

— on the one hand have both the political and cultural power which enables it to overcome the progress which currently favours English, making it, *rebus sic*

stantibus, the only choice;

— on the other hand be led to favour Esperanto both because of its "internal reasons of State" and its "external reasons of State". *Internal reasons of State*: the official federal language, essential in any case, will have to guarantee parity among the great languages of the Union and at the same time make the defence and promotion of minority languages easier. *External reasons of State*: the demand that the hegemony of English and the countries speaking that language be removed from Europe — and, thanks to its example, from the rest of the world!".

... and the "planetary" hypothesis

But such a strategy remains that of the European that I am. At the planetary level it is perhaps possible for another one to be conceived, above all by those who are less sceptical than I am about the capability and future possibilities of the United Nations, or rather by those who have confidence in the actions of one of the new great powers which will mark the XXIst century such as China (where — let us mention in passing — Esperanto is quite appreciated and where an important periodical, *El Popola Ĉinio*, is published in this language) or in analogous actions by other continental Unions whose creation is to be wished for even outside Europe (and whose interest in a "non-colonialist" universal language will be just as important). I say a creation to be wished for since the truth which underpins European federalism — "unity is strength" — shows itself to be even more valuable outside the Ancient Continent and on behalf of the less prosperous countries. Indeed, both political and linguistic independence can be reached, even by those countries — and for all the more reason — only via large, multiple state federations (which will be, amongst other things, a necessary stage on the way, in a more distant future, to a world government whose essential building blocks will be provided by these unions). The rest is mere Utopia: you cannot reach the moon in a hot air balloon.

PART THREE

...and a language tactic for immediate action

The "Paderborn method"

Up to now I have talked about the *political strategy* which is the only one that can definitively ensure that the multilingual nature of Europe, as much as of the planet, is safeguarded. There is, however, a less ambitious and, so to speak, temporary *linguistic tactic*, but it is one which one can — and therefore must — adopt at once. It is the one I call the "Paderborn method".

The Cybernetics Institute of that town — and in particular its director, Professor Helmar Frank — has definitively demonstrated with the mathematical rigour of the science which they profess, what other researchers had already noticed. The logical, simple and clear nature of Esperanto means that this language is a sort of linguistic decimal system since both — Zamenhof's language and the arithmetical decimal system — were both inspired by the same principle of rationality, simplification and the least effort.

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What at first sight may seem paradoxical can then be understood: pupils who study Esperanto for two years acquire basic language skills which mean that, after devoting themselves to the study of a living language (e.g. English) in the following two years, they are able to catch up with, then overtake, other pupils of their age who have studied English since year one. So Esperanto is a fundamentally important propaedeutic tool for learning other languages better and faster, and the total silence of didactic linguists on the matter is simply an additional — and powerful — confirmation of their anti-scientific spirit, their prejudice, their submission to the "master" language.

Now, since neither public opinion nor the establishments of various countries are yet ready to adopt Esperanto as an *end* (that is to say, as an international *lingua franca*), Frank proposes that it should be used temporarily as a *means*, that is to say, as a tool for learning a living language. If this method were to be generally adopted, not only would there have been a contribution towards improving language learning, but also towards spreading knowledge of Esperanto which would subsequently make it much easier for it to be adopted as an *end*.

Indeed, if English is the common enemy of our languages, Esperanto has an even more dangerous enemy: hostility — widespread hostility nourished by ignorance — towards a planned language: a prejudice which constitutes a possibly more redoubtable ally of English than the cunning servility of the didactic linguists. It is in the elimination of this hostility that the "Paderborn method" will be able to make a powerful contribution.

Importance of the Paderborn method

With regard to the thesis advanced in this third part, I confine myself to what I have just said, referring once more to the authors who are quoted in the notes[20].

But I will stress once again that the subject of "Paderborn" calls for the special attention (which has up to now been entirely — and very wrongly — denied to it) of all those who are interested not only in pedagogy, the didactics of languages and in the statistical analysis of tests, but also in scholastic and teaching politics — and, above all, in European and international education.

I am sorry not to be able to develop this subject further, but I should like at least to insist on its importance.

Against multilingual masses

Bound up with the subject of Paderborn is that of the language policy practised nowadays by the majority of countries as well as by specialists (and extolled by the Council of Europe as well as by UNESCO): that of multilingual ability.

It does not require much intelligence to understand that such a policy — certainly of value for future élites — is both impractical and inadequate at the level of the masses (in the heart of which, even in Europe — let it not be forgotten — the level of illiteracy is remarkable). But it is nonetheless regrettable that, once again, I can only give this subject these limited observations[21].

CONCLUSION

Against "cultural Chernobyl", for linguistic democracy

Dum Romae consulitur, Saguntum expugnatur
[While discussions are going on at Rome, the enemy is taking Saguntum]

To summarise: everything seems to confirm the prophetic nature of the verses that Rubén Darío wrote at the beginning of the century in his poem "Los cisnes" [The swans]:

¿Seremos entregado a los bárbaros fieros?
¿Tantos millones de hombres hablaremos inglés?
¿No hay más nobles hidalgos ni bravos caballeros?
¿Callaremos ahora para llorar después?

[Shall we be delivered to the savage barbarians?
So many millions of men, shall we speak English?
Are there no more noble hidalgos, no doughty knights?
Shall we fall silent now and weep later?]

In fact, it is no exaggeration to assert that we are witnessing a planetary phenomenon of "linguistic pollution" comparable with the better known phenomenon of the pollution of the earth, air and water: the two progress with ever increasing speed up to the point of being a threat, one to the very survival of humanity, the "liveability" of the earth; the other to our languages and our cultural and human identity.

Tomorrow it will be too late to fight for the safeguarding of animal or vegetable species which have already disappeared. It is the same in our case: what is at stake is in fact the very survival of languages (and cultures) other than English. So the time for procrastination and sterile debate is past.

In drawing to a close, I therefore repeat what I said at the beginning: scientific formulation, with judicial guidance, of a cohesive and ever more profound and complete notion of the right to a language, to cultural identity, to autochthony, is certainly essential. But if we do not manage to avert the risks of swallowing up language and ethnicity, something which is linked fatally to the continuing support for English, such formulation will be quite useless since the subject of such a study will have disappeared in the mean time. *Antea vivere, deinde philosophari.*

Thus the contradictions which we have evoked and the political solution proposed do not constitute an "aside", an accessory or a footnote to the doctrine of the rights of mankind to language: such a solution is not only an essential but a necessary condition. The fact that this condition is ignored and is turned by everyone into what a psychologist would call a *scotoma* ought to be an additional incentive to us to dedicate ourselves to illuminating this blind spot, both in the *ordo et connexio idearum* and in the *ordo et connexio rerum*.

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The political precondition as a legal argument

More importantly, the political precondition which I am referring to (the absolute necessity of a supranational power able to guarantee, by promoting a planned *lingua franca*, the survival of all languages, for which it will then be possible to ensure their equality of rights) also contains a precise, judicial element. In finishing on this point, I once more emphasise the following remark which appears to me to be fundamental. The lawyers who draw up the doctrine of the "right to language" — in particular for ethnic groups — try to eliminate what, in the words of the title of a work by Emmanuel, we could call the "unequal relationship" between a national and a "state" language on the one hand and "stateless" forms of speech on the other[22]. Now, this selfsame "unequal relationship" is to be found in the relationship between English and national languages with the same features of hegemony, exploitation, "ethnicity-swallowing", *ethnolyse*, distorting all equality in favour of a state of permanent subjugation which has consequences that go well beyond the linguistic and cultural domain[23]. Even from the legal point of view, therefore, it is this fundamental inequality in favour of English — now worldwide and, in the long term, the most dangerous — which must be eliminated more than anything else. In this way we shall have safeguarded, at a planetary level, the pluralism which I shall call "macroglossological", that will allow the parallel study of the ways and means necessary to safeguard "microglossological" pluralism as well, doing away with all other disparities between more or less advantaged languages which still survive at a national or regional level.

This is one more reason, and a decisive one, for overcoming the scotoma which I have already condemned, for finally coming to terms with reality — and for acting at once and on every level before it is too late.

ADDENDUM FOR EUROPEANS

As I said at the beginning, the preceding text was written for the 5th Conference of the International Academy of Linguistic Law which took place at Havana in April 1996. If I had to speak to Europeans — and in particular to Frenchmen, as a rule especially concerned to preserve and promote the rôle and ranking of their language in the world — I should amplify the arguments which have been developed in the foregoing pages, emphasising further[24]:

1) ***The illusion of believing that it is possible, so to speak, to put a rampart round English yet not dispute its position of universal*** **lingua franca**: ***that is to say that it is possible "to contain it as a purely functional language at the level of international information"[25]. This selfsame "functional" quality is the reason why it swallows up languages.***

2) ***The wrong answer given by those who — as victims of a similar illusion — propose that English should remain the planet's auxiliary language, but French should be Europe's[26]. Those Europeans who are not francophones, thus forced to learn two languages, would be even more disadvantaged: proposing such a solution is therefore the surest way of compelling them — for lack of anything better — to throw in their lot once and for all with the English language partisans.***

3) *The fundamental value of Europe's federal unity, as an essential political power in making possible the alternative to English — a planned language — which is proposed in the preceding pages: a further argument — and a major one — in favour of such a Union, one which federalists have neglected too often.*

4) *The fact that this solution is suggested, indeed imposed by a twofold exigency, that of the rationality of the means employed and that of equality between all peoples, for it replaces the law of force with the force of law and the imperfections of nature with the remedies of reflection and science. A solution, therefore, doubly in harmony with the federalist concept: both in terms of abstract reason and of ethics, both with regard to the needs of research and to the concrete requirements of international communication*[22].

SUMMARY

1. Judicial science's formulation of a doctrine of the right to language and to autochthony is only justified by the existence of a plurality of languages and cultures. Now, it is just that which is doubly in danger today. On the one hand, the languages which have political power at their disposal (the major national languages) threaten to extinguish the languages of minorities and of ethnic groups, that is to say, "stateless languages". On the other hand, on the road to becoming the universal *lingua franca* English is itself threatening the national languages, and just as seriously.

2. The first of these dangers has been known, studied and to some extent fought: the basic cause of it, which is political, has been recognised; it has been proposed that it should be mitigated and if possible eliminated by giving a lot of autonomy — cultural, budgetary, political — to ethnic groups; to this end an "internal federalisation" of the national state has been suggested.

The second danger, by contrast, is strangely under-estimated and ignored. So it is high time to scrutinise its possible outcomes (and the ways of preventing them): nothing less than the disappearance of all languages (and cultures) for the benefit of the single, dominant language (and culture): English.

3. Such a forecast may seem exaggerated at first sight. But these three facts can quickly change one's mind:

a) *Firstly*: history proves that Latin (like the languages of the colonisers of the two Americas as well) in the course of the centuries completely destroyed the autochthonous languages of the whole of Europe, from the Iberian peninsula to Dacia, including the language (and culture) of a nation as civilised and developed as the Etruscans. The language-swallowing effect of an imperial language does not have to be proved any longer.

b) *Secondly*: the means of mass communication and the ever closer, denser and more frequent ties between the different countries of the planet will in a few decades determine changes and erasures of languages and cultures which in antiquity have been manifested for centuries (and which are already familiar to "stateless" languages). The acceleration of history modifies historical phenomena down the years not only quantitatively but also qualitatively: the dangers of pollution of earth, water, the atmosphere — practically nonexistent at the beginning of the century — are there to prove it. Thus the ecological catastrophe which threaten us risks being overtaken by a linguistic catastrophe.

c) *Thirdly*: the growing need for a single auxiliary language (an ever more urgent need at all levels — from the simplest, such as tourism, to the highest, such as scientific research) leaves no alternative, as things stand, to the triumph of English. So it is both logically false and morally cowardly to wish to ignore the consequences of this tendency to destroy both

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languages and ethnic groups and not to study from this moment on a less "traumatising" solution (to use a euphemism).

4. This alternative solution must be examined: *a)* firstly, in *abstract* terms; *b)* secondly, as to its feasibility.

a) The history of Latin shows that that language (once it had ceased to be the language of an empire and of a people which dominated the world and was no longer — and this is just as fundamental — a mother tongue for anyone) ceased to wield its power to consume languages. Latin continued throughout the Middle Ages to be the only language of culture, science and the Church, yet failed to prevent the free development of neo-Latin forms of speech. From this it has to be deduced that the only language which does not consume languages is a "dead" one: that is — today and for our purposes — a planned language such as Esperanto. I consider here as proven that the language of Zamenhof really has the qualities which its followers emphasise tirelessly: it is five to ten times easier to learn than an ethnic language; it has an elasticity and power of expression that is equal or superior to that of ethnic languages; it puts the whole world on an equal footing (whether speakers of inflected, agglutinative or isolating languages) and, last but not least, it is the only one which is ready for immediate use thanks to over a century of experience. I said that I am not going to prove all that; I will on the contrary spend some words about the *concrete* possibilities of such a solution.

b) In fact, a language does not become established as a continental or planetary *lingua franca* through its linguistic qualities but thanks to the political, economical, military power of the country or countries which speak it — and which manage to impose it thanks to their hegemony. So the incontestable linguistic advantages of Esperanto constitute an important trump card, even a necessary condition, but in no way a sufficient condition. The essential condition would be that Esperanto should itself also wield political power if not equal to, at least comparable to that of the totality of the anglophone countries: a fundamental law — the very ABC — of sociolinguistics. Esperantists have erred greatly in having always ignored it, thereby deserving the irony of those who mock their ingenuous and quixotic behaviour.

Where then are we to find this strength, this point of support without which Esperanto is destined to remain a Utopia with no future?

5. One possibility — still far off, but serious — is constituted by the European Union. If the latter manages to organise itself into a real federal state it will have a double interest in Esperanto (as well as the power to adopt it): an *internal* interest (a federal language which puts all Europeans on an equal footing) and an *external* interest (a counterpoise to the hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon countries and the embodiment of an example of continental unity and, thanks to this unity, of equal cultural independence, for the peoples of other continents).

Those who are not European will perhaps be able to envisage further routes: for example, fostering sensitivity to this problem by the United Nations (although they appear to be far too weak and impotent for such a task, the urgency of which is increasingly evident), or by great powers which are coming into being such as China, or by other continental unions whose creation is to be hoped for.

6. In any case, the imminence of the danger and the need to find a remedy at once suggest the adoption of a linguistic tactic side by side with the political strategy proposed.

The Institute of Cybernetics at the University of Paderborn has definitively proved, with the mathematical rigour of such a science, that Esperanto constitutes a worthy propaedeutic tool for teaching various languages thanks to its ease of learning, its logical construction, its simplicity, which make a sort of language decimal system. Pupils who study Zamenhof's language for two years and then move on to the study of an ethnic language (e.g. English or Spanish) catch up in two years and then overtake the pupils of their own age who have studied Spanish or English from the start — i.e. for four years.

That then is the immediate tactic: to generalise the Paderborn method. Knowledge of

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foreign languages will be considerably improved while the spread of Esperanto as a *"means"* (that is to say, a propaedeutic tool) will make it easier for everyone in the future to accept Esperanto as the *"end"* (the international auxiliary language): an acceptance opposed today by a thousand psychological or pseudo-scientific prejudices based on laziness and ignorance and harboured by the major vested interests which defend English and the political influence which it carries with it.

• • •

In conclusion: the danger is great; the point of no return is approaching; the time for procrastination is over. We must take action, first tactically, then strategically. As is rightly said: where there's a will there's a way.

NOTES

[1]See generally the periodicals "Europa Ethnica" of Vienna and "Agalia" of Orense, Spain.

[2]Louis-Jean Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialisme*, Paris: Payot, 1974.

[3]Sergio Salvi, *Le nazioni proibite*, Florence: Vallecchi, 1973, and *Le lingue tagliate*, Milan: Rizzoli, 1975.

[4]Guy Héraud, *Peuples et langues d'Europe*, Paris: Denoël, 1968, and *L'Europe des ethnies*, 3rd ed., Brussels: Bruylant, 1993. See also the periodical "L'Europe en Formation" (Nice).

[5]Yvo Peeters, *Volk und Staat. Die Zukunft kleiner Völker und ethnischer Minderheiten im neuen Europa*, "Junges Forum", (Hamburg), Spring 1993.

[6]See the Pavia periodicals – also published in English – "Il Federalista" and "Il dibattito Federalista".

[7]The French original of this text uses two neologisms annotated by the author to describe these phenomena – "glottophagie" and "ethnolyse" – the one invented by Louis-Jean Calvet (see note 2 above), the other by Michel Rimet, *Contacts Interférences ethniques et culturelles*, Montpellier: the author, 1970.

[8]Louis-Jean Calvet, *L'Europe et ses langues*, Paris: Plon, 1993.

[9]Hermann Kahn, *Thinking the unthinkable*, New York: Horizon Press, 1962.

[10]It is particularly noteworthy that this danger – a radical erosion of one's own language – should be perceived now not only by specialists in linguistic problems who have as a mother tongue a language with a relatively restricted spread (such as Theodossia Pavlidou, a Greek, in her contribution to the work under the direction of Florian Coulmas, *A language policy for the European Community*, Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991, or a Danish author in the last contribution to the volume *Det danske sprogs status ar 2001 – er dansk et truet sprog?* ["The status of the Danish language in 2001 – is Danish a threatened language?"], under the direction of J. Normann Jørgenson, Copenhagen: Danmarks Lærerhøjskole, Institut for Dansk Sprog og Literatur, 1991, a review of which can be found in the periodical "Language, Culture and Curriculum", 1991 no. 3, pp. 259-261), but also by German scientists who express the same fear with regard to their language: e.g. R. Posner, *Goodbye lingua teutonica?*, "Target", Amsterdam, 1992, no. 2, pp. 145-170) especially pp. 163-4), and the contribution of Johannes Lohse, Germany's permanent representative at UNESCO, in the work *Nachdenken über Europa*, (Vol. 2), under the direction of A.R. Buinz and others, Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1993.

[11]Hans Martin Gauger, *Das Spanische – eine leichte Sprache*, in the work under the direction of Wolfgang Pöckl, *Europäische Mehrsprachigkeit*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1981.

[12]With regard to these shortcomings of English see: John Wells (a British linguist and "interlinguist") *Why not English?*, a conference which can be obtained on a cassette from the Universal Esperanto Association (Rotterdam); the chapter on English in the work by Richard Schulz, *Was nun Esperanto betrifft...*, Gerlingen: Bleicher, 1986; Claude Piron, *Le défi des langues*, Paris: l'Harmattan, 1994; the works of Passini, Jespersen, Pei and Sapir which will shortly be cited (see note 17 below).

[13]See Piron's work on these matters (note 12) as well as my own cited in note 16. A typical champion of this ideology is George Steiner, *After Babel*, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, 1992.

[14]For the structure and nature of Esperanto see the works by Claude Piron already cited in note 12 and the study, in Esperanto, by John Wells, *Lingvistikaj aspektoj de Esperanto*, Rotterdam: Universala Esperanto-Asocio, 1978. (German trans.: *Linguistische Aspekte der*

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Plansprache Esperanto. Saarbrücken: Saarlandischer Esperanto-Bund, 1987). For the bibliography covering the linguistic and "interlinguistic" aspects of the problem may I draw attention to the one I have given in my work *La politica d'insegnamento della lingue nella Comunità europea. Stato attuale e prospettive future*. Rome: Armano, 1988. The most complete bibliography of the whole problem of invented languages (70 pages of titles) is to be found in the work – a fundamental one – by Detlev Blanke, *Plansprachen. Eine Einführung*, (East) Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985. The simplest, clearest and most complete presentation of Esperanto is the one by Pierre Janton, *L'Espéranto*, Paris: P.U.F., reprinted several times (English trans.: *Esperanto*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), as well as the one by E. Hölscher, *Esperanto: die internationale Sprache*, Nürnberg: Deutscher Esperanto-Bund, 1964.

[15]Once again, see the already cited work by Claude Piron (note 12 above).

[16]Andrea Chiti-Batelli, *Communication internationale et avenir des langues et des parler en Europe*, Nice: Presse d'Europe, 1987.

[17]I refer to two studies by an American scientist and an American linguist of great renown: Edward Sapir, *The function of an international language*, a contribution to the papers by N. Shelton and others, *International communication*, London: Kegan Paul, 1931, and Mario Pei, *One language for the world*, New York: Devin-Adair, 1958 and New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1968, also to the interlinguistic essays by Otto Jespersen, notably his book *An international language*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1928, to the doctoral thesis of François Lo Jacomo, *Liberté ou autorité dans l'évolution de l'espéranto*, Pisa: Edistudio, 1981, and to the work of a Brazilian author, José Passini, *Bilinguismo: utopia ou antibabel*, Campinas: Editora da Universidad Federal Juiz de Fora, Pontes Editores, 1993.

[18]An unawareness and ingenuousness which leads them to rejoice, rather comically, in "pro-Esperanto" resolutions by the League of Nations or UNESCO (to which no-one has ever paid any attention), or in the Christmas and Easter wishes expressed by the Pope in fifty or more languages, including Zamenhof's (which no-one notices). *Sunt lacrymae rerum*...

[19]I believe I am the only one to advance this thesis. So I must once again refer back to my French language work, cited above, as well as to my study, also in French, *Éducation fédéraliste et culture européenne*, Nice: Presses d'Europe, 1992 and to my book in Italian, *Una lingua per l'Europa*, Padua: Cedam, 1987.

[20]The simplest and clearest presentation of the Paderborn method and of the supporting arguments has been made by Helmut Sonnabend in the essay, in Esperanto, *Esperanto: lerneja eksperimento*, Pisa: Edistudio, 1979. The essence has been summarised in my already cited work, *Communication internationale et avenir des langues et des parlers en Europe*, Nice: Presses d'Europe, 1987, on pp. 35-42, with a bibliography on pp. 53-57. Briefer, but very effective, Helmar Frank, *Europäische Sprachpolitik*, "Aus Politik und Seitgeschichte" (Bonn) 26th March 1983 (Italian trans. in Giordano Formizzi, *La lingua internazionale nella storia della pedagogia*, vol. II, *Documenti*, Verona: Libreria Editrice Universitaria, 1987). The most complete and scientifically most rigorous presentation of the Paderborn method is found in the works of the Paderborn and Berlin Cybernetics Institutions, *Kybernetische Pädagogik* (the latter, up to now, is the 6th under the direction of V.K. Barandovská-Frank, Bratislava: Esprima, and San Marino: AIEP, 1993). The limitations of such a method, the results obtained and the need to apply yet more refined techniques to get definitive confirmation are shown in a particularly remarkable article (in Italian) by Renato Corsetti and Mauro La Torre, *Quale lingua prima? Per un esperimento della Comunità Europea che utilizzi l'Esperanto*, "Language Problems and Language Planning" (Amsterdam), Spring 1995.

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[21]I dealt with it in depth in my French language book in 1987 (see note 16 above), in which I gave a fairly complete bibliography of the linguistic policy of the Council of Europe. (At least two further texts must be added to those – all printed in Strasbourg – which I cited: the final Conference Report on Project no. 12, *L'apprentissage des langues en Europe: le défi de la diversité*, 1989, and the Symposium Report on the *Transparence et la cohérence dans l'apprentissage des langues en Europe: objectifs, évaluation, certification*, 1993.) Under this policy, submission to English is total. The same remarks apply to UNESCO with a reminder at least of the publication by Edward Batley, Michel Candelier, Gisela Hermann-Brennecke and György Szépe, *Les politiques linguistiques dans le monde pour la 21ère siècle. Rapport pour l'UNESCO*, Paris: UNESCO, 1993, a publication which I have analysed and criticised in my monograph *La politica comunitaria dell' educazione*, Rome: the author, 1995. (The publications by UNESCO also appear in English, as do those of the Council of Europe.)

[22]Arghiri Emmanuel, *L'échange inégal*, Paris: Maspéro, 1969 (English trans. *Unequal exchange*, London: New Left Books, 1972). On the other hand, the expression "stateless languages" belongs to Sergio Salvi.

[23]To the quotation from Emmanuel must be added that from a work by Paolo Freiro, *Pedagogia do oprimado*, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1970, Spanish trans. *Pedagogia del oprimido*, Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1970 (both reprinted several times); English trans. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, New York: Herder and Herder, 1970. See also, by the same author, *Educação como prática da libertad*, Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1967 (likewise reprinted several times).

[24]I am summarising here arguments which I have developed more fully in my French work cited under note 16.

[25]Henri Gobar, *L'aliénation linguistique*, Paris: Flammarion, 1976 (p. 270). It is also the illusion of several Italian federalists (see, for example, what Francesco Rossolillo writes in "Il Federalista" (Pavia, 1984, no. 1, and 1987 no. 2, a periodical which at the time was published in French and English as well).

[26]Jean-François Deniau, *L'Europe interdite*, Paris: Seuil, 1977 (p. 258 et seq.) And "Le Figaro", 30th August 1993; Philippe Lalanne-Berdouticq, *Appel aux francophones pour le français langue d'Europe*, Paris: La Pensée Universelle, 1979.

[27]Unfortunately there is at the moment only one international organisation which tries – within the limits of its modest means – to assert this European political premiss as being indispensable to Esperanto's success: the *Esperanto Radikala Asocio*, 74 via Torre Argentina, IT-00186 Rome, Italy; tel. +39 6 689791; e-mail: e.r.a.@agora.stm.it; http://esperanto.stm.it. As a first glance about European and world federalism I suggest to the English speaking reader the works of Lionel Robbins (*The economic causes of war* and *Planned economy and international order*), of Ronald MacKay and John Pinder, as well as of Clarence Streit (*Union now*) and of Emery Reeves (*Anatomy of peace*). See also the Italian review, available in English too, *The Federalist*, Pavia.

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In addition to several books and articles about the problems of the European Union (which have appeared in French in the periodical "L'Europe en formation", Nice), he has written Communication internationale et avenir des langues et des parlers en Europe, *Nice, Presses d'Europe, 1987, 197 pp., in which he criticises, among other things, the language policies of the European Communities and the Council of Europe and shows the importance that the adoption of Esperanto as an international language would have in particular for the linguistic minorities and the ethnic groups whose cultural identity is today threatened by the great national languages.*

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Publication list of Esperanto Documents

No.	Title
1	Unesco and the UEA *
2	Universal Esperanto Association, Annual Report 1974-75 *
3	The 60th Universal Congress of Esperanto *
4	The development of poetic language in Esperanto *
5	The contribution of the Universal Esperanto Association to world peace *
6	An introduction to Esperanto Studies *
7	Esperanto on the air
8	The Universal Esperanto Association in International Women's Year 1975 *
9	International travel by speakers of Esperanto *
10	Universal Esperanto Association, Annual Report 1975-76
11	Language problems and the Final Act *
12	Esperanto and the Universal Esperanto Association *
13	Language and the right to communicate *
14	Esperanto and older people
15	Language and international communication. The right to communicate
16	The use of the International Language Esperanto as a partial solution to language problems in international nongovernmental organizations: Some recommendations *
17	Understanding among Africans: Linguistic isolations and linguistic communication *
18	The future of modern languages in English-speaking countries
19	The cultural value of Esperanto *
20	Translation in International Organizations *
21	Language equality in international cooperation *
22	Esperanto: European or Asiatic language?
23	Esperanto and the Universal Esperanto Association
24	Resolutions of the 65th World Esperanto Congress
25	Constitution of the Universal Esperanto Association
26	The language problem in the Non-Aligned Movement
27	Esperanto in the service of the United Nations *
28	Current work in the linguistics of Esperanto *
29	Esperanto and literary translation
30	Esperanto and the International Year of Disabled Persons 1981
31	The educational value of Esperanto study: An American view *
32	Unesco and the UEA 1976-1982
33	World Communications Year: Social and linguistic aspects of modern communication
34	The language problem in tourism *
35	A history of the World Esperanto Youth Organization
36	A lingua franca for Africa *
37	The contribution of the Universal Esperanto Association to world peace
38	The language problem in science and the role of the International Language Esperanto
39	The International Language Esperanto 1887-1987: Towards the second century
40	Esperanto: A review of its present situation *
41	Europe's Babylon: Towards a single European Language?
42	Psychological reactions to Esperanto
43	Esperanto Studies: An Overview
44	A Policy for Esperanto

Several of the above documents are also available in French and Esperanto.
** Out of print*

National Esperanto organizations in English speaking countries

Australia: **Australian Esperanto Association**, 143 Lawson St., Redfern NSW 2016; ☎ (02)9698-2729; e-mail: esperanto@gco.apana.org.au

Canada: **Canadian Esperanto Association**, P.O. Box 2159, North Saanich BC V8L 3S6

Great Britain: **British Esperanto Association**, 140 Holland Park Av., London W11 4UF; ☎ (0171)727-7821; fax (0171)229-5784; e-mail: eab.esperanto@demon.co.uk

India: **Esperanto Federation of India**, 5 Archana Corner, Sahyadri Park, Salunkhe Vihar Rd., Pune IN-411048; ☎ (212)662-132; ☎+fax (212)662-323

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